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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

WALL ADORNMENT.

By J. C.



THE most important advances of late years made by colorists, next to textile productions, have undoubtedly been in wall paper designs. We would point out as a novel and pleasing feature in a lately imported wall paper design, the introduction of what may be termed a middle ground. Full blown fuchsias, in brown and white, connected by winding stems, are scattered on a surface of blue in middle tint, but on this, though rather within it, as seen through an atmospheric or watery medium, appear at an apparently unknown distance and in lighter blue, slender stems thinly clad with small leaves. The conception may be developed in varied form. In all wall designs lineal beauty is to be specifically aimed at, and, as a rule, the best designs are the simplest. Much depends on the scale of an all over flowing pattern whether it shall please or otherwise. Figures, insufficiently spaced, may mar an otherwise attractive and pleasing pattern.

Why should we not have wall designs hand painted and on wall paper that should provide plain spaces for framed paintings, showing only the ground of the general surface of wall, or in tints suitable for the paintings. The spaces might differ in size, even in color, and providing a margin beyond the frames, they would furnish these, as it were, with a formal setting, instead of leaving them to cut up irregularly the figures of the wall. These spaces could be marked out with lines of color or gracefully wreathed in foliage.

It would be well were wall paper designs provided that would not be abruptly cut off by the frieze. The supply of special friezes to suit special designs was a decided step in advance on the part of wall paper manufacturers, but rooms so vary in size, character and general requirements, and individual taste takes such multiform phases, that such friezes obtain but limited adoption. Designs consisting of longitudinal bands of ornament,

having spaces between—bands not to be marked with distinct lines of color—would approximate to what is wanting to avoid abrupt endings.

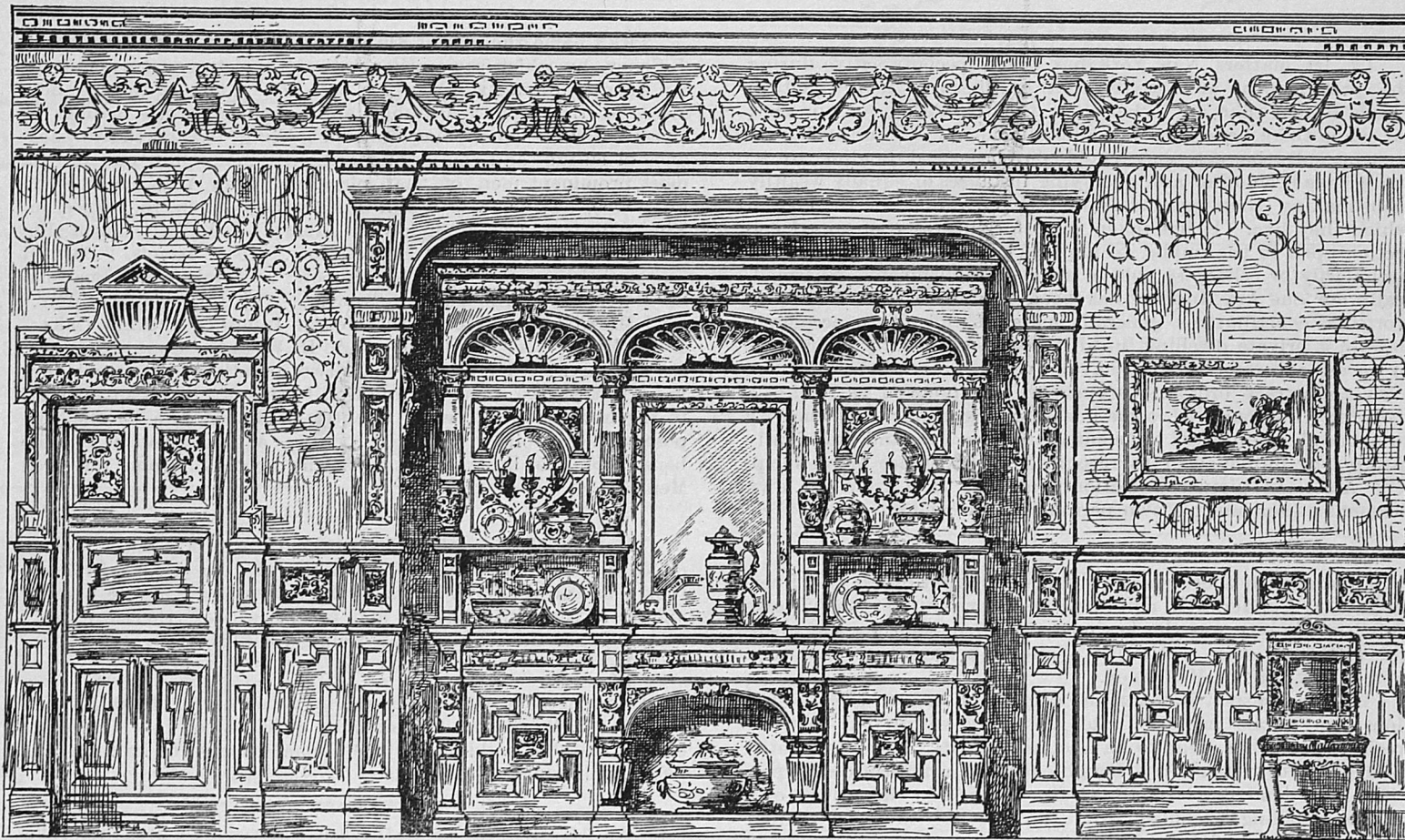
No error can be greater than supposing that to produce a certain color effect in a room, all surfaces susceptible of color—walls, woodwork, carpets, curtains and upholstery covers—must receive a whole body of that color; it has been well remarked that “just as one vivid light will often carry more meaning to the brain than a whole sheet of it,” so a great amount of the same color will dull the senses to its reception, and act like a wet blanket to fancy, whilst a few brilliant bits of the desired tint, artistically disposed, will do all that is required.

A word as to moldings. The attempt to introduce the mediæval style has often failed in intended effect from the too great massiveness of the moldings relatively to size of room, notwithstanding their quaint and picturesque features. More attention needs to be given to the depth of moldings in room woodwork and stucco. Owing to the extent to which mechanism has superseded handwork, and the turning out of moldings on a wholesale scale, we have constantly the same depth in different sized rooms. Here we may observe that however delicately a ceiling may be treated with color, should the moldings of frieze and cornice be so bold as to throw a shadow above, they will inevitably impart to its color decoration an appearance of heaviness.

Where a cove is introduced bearing stencilled figures of plant and flower growth, a fine effect may often be obtained by allowing these to overlap the ceiling, the more effective that they there enter on a differently tinted ground.

It is but an ordinary and common device, by no means the most effective, to repeat on a frieze the colors of the general wall surface, of course in intenser hues, but it is far better to furnish good contrastive combinations. At the same time the tints with which the moldings of a cornice are picked out should have some reference to the frieze.

The frieze, when united to the cornice, is to be regarded as the framework of the ceiling, and as the lid of a rich casket ordinarily receives a more delicate and richer ornamentation than the sides, so the ceiling, as the crown of the room, the culmination of surface decoration, calls for elegant but subdued treatment, that shall enhance the effect of wall decorative surfaces, as well as the furnishings. The colors of the cornice, as well as those of the frieze, should deepen in depth and brilliancy as they recede from it. A certain correspondence and harmony of parts between the decorative coloring of wall and ceiling will, even if the designs be not strikingly elegant and impressive, convey the impression of breadth.



SIDE OF DINING-ROOM, WITH RECESSED SIDBOARD, BY JOHN H. PHILLIPS, CARDIFF, WALES.

The subject selected is the side of a dining-room. The treatment is Flemish of the Renaissance period. The chief feature is the recessed sideboard, to which I have endeavored to give special prominence in my design. The opening is carried up to the level of the frieze, and is surmounted by a bold cornice, supported by panelled pilasters. The sideboard projects outwards a little and thus affords the necessary relief. The paneling and furniture may be of walnut, contrasting with a dead leaf green wall paper, with frieze of a buff tint, and the cornice harmoniously picked out. The paneling of the ceiling should be treated in a correspondingly conventional manner. An agreeable alternative effect may be produced more economically by the substitution of a common wood dado painted in brown madder, and wall paper of Indian red.